



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION
FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**
Celebrating 27 Years of Advocacy & Achievement

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December 14, 2011

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Patricia Curry, Chair 
Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families

RE: TITLE IV-E WAIVER

At the Commission for Children and Families (Commission) meeting held on November 21, 2011, the Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Probation presented strategies for the Title IV-E Waiver (Waiver) budget. While the Commission has been very supportive of the Waiver and its proposed enhancements and expansion, the Commission is concerned with the following information and strategies from the DCFS/Probation presentation:

1. Up-Front Assessment

A significant amount of Waiver funding has been spent over the last six years on up-front assessments under the Family Preservation contracts. It is our understanding that the Family Preservation providers' contracts are currently being evaluated. It is not clear to us whether the evaluation being done includes: 1) an outcome study to determine if children have experienced better outcomes as a result of the up-front assessments; 2) whether there is a better assessment strategy than the up-front assessments; or 3) whether changes based on the evaluation should be implemented.

2. Reunification

We recommend DCFS explore the feasibility of using Waiver funds to increase permanency for children and families in the child welfare system. Small studies conducted by DCFS have shown a need to commit resources to promote family visitation, transition children home and provide immediate aftercare services in the community. Data from DCFS on the timelines to reunification show little change from August 2009 through October 2011. In addition, re-entry into foster care rates are 12 percent. In order to create systems change, resources from the Waiver funds need to be invested in the above reunification efforts.

3. Waiver Extension

DCFS indicated that counties who were successful in obtaining a Waiver extension through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services had maintained their original strategies. DCFS indicated that they plan on taking the same approach in their Waiver extension request. The Commission recommends that DCFS examine their present strategies and analysis to determine if the current strategy will provide a positive systems change resulting in better outcomes for children and families.

We encourage DCFS and the Probation Department to develop a strategy for the Waiver based on clear outcomes, evaluations and analysis with benchmarks that show progress or suggest needs for changes in implementation. We hope this process can be inclusive and transparent during the decision-making process.

Additionally, we respectfully request that your Board keep us informed on any actions taken to address these issues, and contact me if our Commission can assist in the process.

PC:HAK:na

c: Chief Executive Officer
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Chief Probation Officer
Interim Director, Department of Children and Family Services
County Counsel
Children's Deputies